

The C A S E of the Waggoners and Carriers of Goods and Merchandizes, through the several Roads of England.

Humbly submitted to the Honourable House of Commons assembled in Parliament.

THAT in the Sessions of Parliament 1695, the said Carriers were heard (as to many Grievances and Oppressions imposed on them by several pretended Informers) before a Committee of this Honourable House, who were pleased 14th of March 1695, to make their Report.

That it was their Opinion, the Petitioners had fully proved the Allegations of their said Petitions, and deserv'd Relief of the House. And also that the House be moved for leave to bring in a Bill for explaining the several Acts relating to the High-ways, and for preventing the Abuses arising thereby.

To which the House agreed, committed *John Littlehale*, for oppressing the Petitioners, to Custody of the Sergeant at Arms, and a Bill was then drawn up, and pass'd into a Law, Intituled, *An Act for better amending and repairing the High ways, and Explanation of the Laws relating thereto.*

By which, it was (amongst other things) Enacted, That all Carriers and Waggoners should be obliged to draw with double Shafts, and a Pole between their Wheel-Horses, &c.

But it having been tried, it was found by experience to be impossible to pass the several narrow Roads of this Kingdom, and Gate-ways of Inns, and Passages of Streets, where the Petitioners must come to abide and lodge their said Waggon and Wares, with such double Shafts and Poles, for that they are not broad enough to contain the same.

The said *John Littlehale*, and other Informers, have taken upon them to prosecute the Petitioners for Forfeitures committed, by not driving pursuant to the said Act, which is impossible to be done.

And some Justices of Peace have been so civil and encouraging to these Informers, to grant them Warrants for Distress of the said Carriers Horses, to levy the Penalties and Forfeitures incurred by their not complying with the said Impossibility.

By which means, the said Carriers have suffer'd very much, and are not able to go on with their Callings, unless these Grievances are redrest. Some whereof are as follow. Particularly,

That the 6th of March 1698, Seven Horses were seized from Mr. *Basse*, Leicester Carrier at *Brown's Well* in *Finchly* Parish, upon Warrants granted by Justice *Munday* of the Temple, and carried away by *William Hull*, Brother-in-Law to *John Littlehale*, viz. five Horses out of the Waggon, which were all that it was drawn with; one Horse from Mr. *Basse's* Man, which he rode on, and a Gelding which he led in his hand. And the said *Hull*, assisted by two Soldiers, demanded 10 *l.* of him, for non-payment of which, they swore they would knock him off his Horse, and in a violent abusive manner forced all the said Horses from him, whereby he was necessitated to leave the said Waggon, loaden with Wares and Merchandizes, in the open Road, till he came to *London*, to get Money to clear them, or a Replevin. And afterwards when a Replevin was obtained from the Sheriff of *Middlesex*, the said persons refused to obey it, and forcibly resisted the Officers, who came to execute it, and restore the said Horses.

Leicester.

At the same time and place, the said *Hull* and his Agents, by Mr. *Munday's* Warrant, seized six Horses from Mr. *Wilkinson's* Waggon of *Nottingham*; demanded ten Pounds of his man, and gave him the like Language and Usage.

Nottingham.

The beginning of February 1698, the said *Hull* and his Agents seized two Horses, two Collars, and two pair of Traces from the said *Wilkinson*, *Nottingham* Carrier for four Pound, at *Highgate*, and the four Pound was paid to redeem them.

And at the same time and place, the said *Hull* and his Agents seized two Horses, two Collars, and two pair of Traces, from *Samuel Locker's* Waggon, Carrier to *Derby*, for four Pound, and the four Pound was paid to redeem them.

Derby.

About the 21th of February, the said *Hull* and his Agents seized two Horses in the Parish of *Finchly* for four Pound more from the said *Locker*, *Derby* Carrier.

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These three last Seizures by Warrants from Mr. Tho. Smith, Justice of Peace at Clerkenwell. And about a fortnight ago, the said Hull, with Mr. Brown the Constable of Finchly, and the Headborough there, sue'd 12 Warrants at one time, for 40 s. each Warrant, granted by the aforesaid Mr. Smith, and Mr. Munday.

Memorandum, A little before these last mentioned Seizures, John Littlehale came to borrow five Pound of the said Mr. Locker, Derby Carrier, and because he would not lend him the Money, therefore the said Hull was sent with the said Warrants to seize his Horses as aforesaid.

Stamford. About September last, the said Hull seized the Horses of Joshua Guest, Carrier of Stamford, upon five Warrants, granted by Mr. Smith for ten Pound. Which Summ of ten Pound, the said Guest was forced to pay the Overseers of Islington and Clerkenwell; and could obtain no Replevin in this case.

Wellingborow. About October last, the Horses of Edward Edwards of Wellingborow in Northamptonshire, were seized in St. John-street, and the Bench of Justices being set at Hick's Hall, the said Edwards applied himself to them, who told him he must pay the Money, for there was no remedy.

And the said Edwards Horses were seized a little before, by the Headboroughs of Finchly, and forced to pay.

Berry. Robert Cook of Berry hath suffer'd upon this account, within a little more than a year past, very near the value of fifty Pound.

Cambridge. Richard Huske of Cambridge, Norwich Carrier, hath upon this account suffered about fifty Pound.

Norwich. Tho. Surket of Norwich hath suffered upon this account near the value of fifty Pound.

Cambridge. Nathaniel Lancaster of Cambridge hath suffered above the value of twenty Pound.

Cambridge. Mr. Carter, John Day, and Mr. Pegram, Cambridge Carriers, the like.

Westbury. Charles Turner, Carrier from Westbury, Wilts, was forced to pay four Pounds lately on this account, and other Summs formerly.

Taunton. John Whitemarsh of Taunton hath paid several Summs of Money on this account.

Portsmouth. Mr. Brown, Mr. Gillot, Mr. Goldring and Mr. Bennet, Portsmouth Carriers, were forced to pay several Summs on this account.

Dover. Mr. Giblon of Dover hath suffered very much on this account.

Saffron-Walden. Mr. Smith and Mr. Nott from Saffron-Walden the like.

Bristol. Giles Ishell and Toby Lunt, Bristol Carriers, had their Horses seized lately for four Pound each, and have paid several Summs formerly on this account.

Bath. John Peers of Bath had his Horses seized about a fortnight ago for forty Shillings.

Wiltshire. Philip Woodruff, John Wiltshire and Mr. Hales of Froom-Selwood, all of Wiltshire, had their Horses seized several times, and for several Summs on this account.

Berkshire. Mr. Gerle of Newbery, the like.

Bucks. Mr. Kent of Oney in Buckinghamshire hath been forced to give and lend John Littlehale Money as often as he pleased to demand it upon this account.

Derby. And Mr. Locker, and Mr. Worrall of Derby have been forced to lend the said Littlehale several Summs of Money on this account.

North. And the said Littlehale hath made his Brags, that he gives the North Country Carriers 500 l. per Annum, by taking of them only his own part, and not forcing them to pay the other shares of the Forfeitures to the Poor and the High-ways.

Stamford. And his Brother Hull hath offer'd to Mr. Guest of Stamford, and others, if at any time they would pay him his part for informing, he would never bring Warrants against them, to seize their Horses, but come and take his Moyety, and let them go about their business.

It were innumerable to repeat all the particular instances which have been committed of this kind; but in general, all the Waggoners and Carriers of the Roads of England have felt the smart thereof more or less.

And the way is, for the said Informers first to come and try if they can get Agreements for yearly Salaries to be paid them by consent from some, and to come and borrow of others quarterly Summs; and in that case no notice is taken how they drive or draw. But if either of these ways be not complied with, then immediately Littlehale sets his Brother Hull and others to be Informers, and by the help of some Justices (for there are but few that will encourage this practice; as knowing what is impossible to be done, is unreasonable to be required) they get Warrants, and seize the Horses and Effects of the poor Carriers.

All which is humbly submitted to the Consideration of this Honourable House, who are hoped, will be pleased to give the Petitioners such Relief, as to their great Clemency and Wisdom shall seem meet.